



# **ServSafe® Alcohol**

## **Hospitality Supplement**

## **Message to Hospitality Instructors**

This supplement was designed to add important lodging-specific content to the ServSafe Alcohol program and can be used when training hospitality employees. Standard practices of responsible alcohol service, such as not serving to minors, preventing intoxication, and handling difficult situations, apply to service in a hospitality setting just as they would in a restaurant setting. Trainers teaching ServSafe Alcohol in a hospitality environment may revise their current training materials based on the information in this supplement to better reflect hospitality situations.

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## Alcohol Service in Guestrooms

Guests can get alcohol in their guestrooms from minibars and in-room dining service. So in-room dining attendants, uniformed service staff members, and others play an important role in preventing intoxicated and underage guests from obtaining alcohol.

### Minibars (In-Room Stock)

In general, minibars are stocked with beer, wine, and distilled spirits. This provides an opportunity for guests to consume alcohol in an unsupervised environment, posing a substantial risk to both the guests and the property.

#### Legal Requirements

Properties may be allowed to operate minibars in any guestroom if they have been issued liquor licenses or have acquired minibar permits.

Several states have issued laws and ordinances specific to the operation of guestroom minibars. While these laws vary from state-to-state, they typically address the following:

- Locking devices on minibars
- Legal age of employees who can restock or inventory alcoholic beverages in a minibar
- Legal age of guests who can occupy a guestroom equipped with a minibar
- Documenting the sale of alcoholic beverages sold or dispensed from a minibar
- Hours of minibar service
- Size and number of alcohol containers allowed in minibars

#### Policies for Handling Guest Access to Minibars

It is impossible to monitor what a guest does in a guestroom. However, lodging properties and their employees are not permitted to knowingly allow the unlawful sale or consumption of alcohol.

- Guests who appear to be intoxicated or who are suspected of being under 21 years of age must be denied access to guestroom minibars containing alcoholic beverages.
- Hotel staff members must inform management and security of any situation where an intoxicated or underage guest is seeking or may be given access to a minibar.
- Communication among all relevant departments is critical when monitoring the responsible and legal consumption of alcohol from minibars.

### Room Service (In-Room Dining)

Many properties serve alcohol as a part of their in-room dining service. Employees who serve alcohol in this environment must follow the same laws and regulations as restaurant servers and bartenders.

#### Intoxicated Guests

Guests who have been denied alcohol service at other outlets within the property or who arrive already intoxicated may try to order alcohol through room service. These guests may feel that because they are staying at the property and are in their guestroom, they can continue drinking. However, the property's liability does not end when a guest enters a guestroom. The property is required to follow the law and is still liable for the safety of that guest, other guests, and the surrounding community.

- In-room dining attendants must watch for signs of intoxication in any guest ordering alcohol.
- All staff must communicate concerns to their manager.
- The in-room dining department should be notified if a guest appears to be intoxicated or has been denied alcohol service at other outlets on the property.

## **Minors**

Minors can be quite resourceful and will work hard to get alcohol. One strategy often used by minors is to combine their money to rent a hotel room, often paying in cash. Once in the room, they attempt to order alcoholic beverages through in-room dining service. To avoid serving alcohol to minors, do the following:

- Follow the property's policies.
- Verify the age of anyone you suspect may be a minor when delivering alcoholic drinks to guestrooms as part of an in-room dining order.
  - \* Checking IDs is your legal responsibility and an important part of controlling access of alcohol to minors.

## **Denying In-Room Alcohol Service**

When taking and delivering orders, in-room dining staff should observe and look for the following signs that guests are intoxicated or underage:

- Guests displaying relaxed inhibitions, impaired judgment, slowed reaction time (e.g., slow response time when answering the door), and impaired motor coordination (e.g., lack of coordination when answering the door)
- Juices, sodas, energy drinks or other substances in the guestroom, which are commonly used as drink mixers
- Changes in the arrangement of furniture
- Youthful sounding voices placing orders
- Guests inside the guestroom that look underage
- A difference in the number of guests registered for a guestroom and the actual number present
- Cups or other containers that may have been brought in from other locations (Minors will often use opaque containers to conceal the contents)
- Empty bottles of liquor in the guestroom (in the trash, on the bed, on desks)
- Drugs or other illegal substances
- Medications
- Visible injuries to guests

If you suspect a guest is intoxicated or underage, follow your property's procedures and:

- Contact your manager and/or security immediately.
- Calmly explain the property's policy.
- Do not argue or make judgments.
- Take the alcoholic beverages you are delivering with you and leave the guestroom. (Intoxicated and upset guests are unpredictable and may pose a safety risk.)
- Do not try to confiscate any liquor that may already be in the room.
- Wait for your manager and/or security to handle the situation.

## Other Situations

### Retail Outlets

Hotel retail outlets or shops, which are usually located in the lobby, have become a common feature in lodging properties. Many have upgraded and expanded their merchandise options to include the sale of alcohol. It is now common to see chillers and racks displaying beer, wine, and distilled liquor bottles. With this option comes the need for additional safeguards.

- Hotel retail outlets that sell alcoholic beverages must be monitored at all times.
- Staff assigned to these outlets must monitor chillers and racks to ensure underage people do not have access to alcohol.
- Employees must verify the age of any guest who appears to be underage.
- Employees must refuse the sale of alcohol to any guest who appears to be intoxicated.
- Guests who have been denied alcohol service or denied access to a guestroom minibar should not be allowed to purchase alcohol at a hotel retail outlet.
- Retail outlet employees should be aware of any concerns that would prevent the sale of alcohol to a guest.

### Special Events

Special events, like meetings, banquets, and receptions, require special alcohol service procedures because it can be more difficult to control alcohol risks effectively. While it's important to deliver good customer service and make guests feel comfortable; servers must ensure their service continues to follow the law.

- Don't allow guests to distract you from your responsibilities.
- Verify the age of anyone who appears to be a minor
  - \* Do this even if their age has previously been verified and they are wearing an identifier (e.g., wristband or stamp) indicating that they are 21 years of age or older.
- Refuse service to intoxicated guests.
- Make sure intoxicated guests do not leave the property.
  - \* Escort intoxicated guests to their guestroom.
  - \* Make sure the guest does not leave the property.

In these types of situations, it's extremely important for servers to work as a team with other employees to monitor and control alcohol consumption and use the proper form of intervention.

### Situations Requiring Discretion When Stopping Alcohol Service

You must stop alcohol service to any guest who has had too much to drink. However, certain situations may require a little more discretion when stopping service. This is especially true when stopping service to a guest of someone hosting an event—like a wedding—at your property.

Here are some guidelines that should be followed when stopping service in these situations.

- Get a supervisor or manager to speak with the host (if required at your property).
- Do not directly confront guests.
- Find a way to move the host away from the guests.
- Explain the situation and ask the host to speak with the guests to control the situation.
- If the host is uncomfortable speaking with the guests or refuses to do so, speak directly to the guests.
- Continue by following the procedures for stopping alcohol service outlined in this course.